

Literary Review of Latest Publications

By A. D. JACOBSON.

DESCRIBES DIPLOMATIC LIFE.

AT THE COURT OF HIS CATHOLIC MAJESTY: By William Miller Collier, former United States Minister to Spain. (The Knickerbocker Press, New York City. Price, \$2.00.)

Mr. Collier, who represented the United States of America at the Escurial from 1905 to 1909, is presenting his experiences at the Madrid Court, describing the life of a diplomat as he himself lived it. He writes candidly of the period of his residence in the city by the Manzanares River, which was an unusually brilliant one as far as court ceremonial was concerned. Hence descriptions of pageants and etiquette at this ultra feudal European court figure prominently in these pages.

Of course the volume abounds in many interesting sidelights on court intrigues, troubles, and trials, from which republicans are so free. Illustrating this, Mr. Collier relates the following instance of how the fate of a nation may hang on a ribbon:

Several years ago the minister of the marine of one of the European countries resigned because the ruler of a neighboring country, on the occasion of his visit to its capital, gave him a certain rank in a certain order, but gave to his colleague a still higher rank. The minister of marine contended that it was an insult to the navy of his country, despite the fact that the official who had been the recipient of the higher rank, already had been given the lower rank on a previous occasion. In his opinion his government, in not demanding that the foreign government give him also the higher rank of the foreign order, had permitted its navy to be insulted. Therefore he resigned and the ministry fell.

Mr. Collier dispels the impression that, when kings take part in sporting events, it is customary for other competitors to let them win out of deference. He mentions a pigeon shoot between Alfonso of Spain and his neighboring monarch, King Carlos of Portugal, in which the latter won out, and says:

"You may be sure that the best man won for kings are good sportsmen and do not esteem those who from a false sense of deference, let them win. King Carlos was known as a good shot, and King Alfonso had the reputation of being one of the very best in Spain. He has won many prizes in all forms of sport, but has lost more than he has won. I remember once attending a meeting of the Yacht Club, when he was to award the prizes to the winner of a regatta. It was amusing when he announced that a certain money prize had been won by 'his majesty the King,' to see him forthwith thrust it into his pocket."

The author says that during his sojourn there he has learned more and more to esteem the Spanish character. In this period occurred the marriage of the King's younger son, the Duke of Segovia, and the birth of the heir to the throne, and of several other children to the royal pair. Cardinals received from the King the highest honors, and the sovereigns made state visits to the Escurial. State ceremonies attended all these events, and grand pageants were connected with many of them. While all was modern, yet in small extent it was clothed in medieval garb, as prescribed by precedent and tradition. Mr. Collier has eschewed all mention of the glorious historic past of the land of the Old Castile.

"Who can help admiring the people who in ancient days gave to Rome's conquering legions their most stubborn resistance, and who, in the face of the Moorish invasion, rather died to a man than surrender. Who can resist the plaintive melody of the 'Song of Roland,' when forever chants the requiem of Charlemagne's great Galien, defeated in the Pass of Roncesvalles by the Spaniards? Who can fail to admire the noble example, the fortitude, the perseverance of a race, who, after having been hurled back by the invader, have fastened of the north by the wave of the Moorish invasion, for seven centuries waged ceaseless warfare until at Granada they captured the Moslem's last stronghold."

Mr. Collier reminds us that a nation that, when their kings had faltered and failed and the Corsican invader had entered their borders, had placed his throne of Castile and Andalusia, with indomitable spirit and aided by their British allies, beat back the armies of Bonaparte that, in conquering an entire continent, hastened his doom by saving all of Europe from being subjected to the will of one man, must be unperishable.

THE CONVICTIONS OF A GRANDFATHER: By Robert Grant. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City.)

It is barely possible to presume that Judge Grant was serious in calling his latest book of amiable disquisitions on social problems and phenomena "convictions" which he as a grandfather has come to hold, for it is the characteristic of the grandfather he represents to have opinions rather than convictions, and to be ready to change these opinions with the changing times, and to be content with the hardening of the arteries, if begun, has not advanced far enough to produce noticeable mental symptoms. He calls himself, like every one else, a progressive, and he is, and does not, so entitled him to pass for a radical in conservative circles, and that is much for any grandfather in comfortable circumstances and with a comfortable position of descendants of the first and second degree.

The topics treated in Judge Grant's pleasant, lucid but careless style form the subject of thought and conversation among intellectual and cultivated people. The effect of "real" wealth, the amazing ignorance of our glided youth about books that a generation or two ago everybody knew more or less by heart, the injustice of duplicated inheritance taxes, the curious fact that our country, which is credited with having the best, kindest, and most generous of husbands, has, judging from the divorce court records, also the greatest number of desperately discontented wives, the rights and wrongs of labor and capital, etc., etc., and a dozen or so other disputable are debated between this grandfather and his wife, his sons and daughters and their husbands or wives, pessimistic doctors, a clergyman who disapproves of everything and a multi-millionaire pathetically eager to justify his existence by reasonableness and generosity.

It is a very large programme for one book until the reader discovers that the author has settled nothing whatever, but that he has very fairly presented both sides of many interesting, even important questions and playfully has taught laymen something of law and the fundamental principles of legal procedure. What he says of the making and breaking of wills is especially interesting and enlightening. This was to be expected coming from the author's long experience on the bench. Of inheritance taxes he approves in general, but he objects to treating big estates as sharks treat a dead whale, each taking as many bites as possible.

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A journey by automobile to the palace of Fontainebleau is charmingly described by Charles Johnston in the current issue of Harper's Weekly. "There is a sense of human life in France that is not to be found in any other country in the world," says this author. Other articles of interest to automobile owners who intend to spend the summer in Europe will appear in forthcoming numbers of this publication.

Marie Beulah Dix, who already has an enviable reputation as a fiction writer for adults, bids fair to make her mark as a juvenile author, too. Messrs. Henry Holt and Company announce that they are already having to reprint her "Friends in the End."

C. J. Cuffie Hynes, the English author, whose late novel, "The Marriage of Capt. Kettle" (Bobb's Merril's), has caused a revival of interest in sea stories, contemplates another long sea voyage in the near future. "However," he says, "I never expect to take another voyage which will give me the happiness I experienced during my first one. Now I feel that I must travel as a first cabin passenger on board the big liners. On my first voyage I was contented with freight boats and about half the time I worked my passage before the mast."

Messrs. Henry Holt and Company have issued a notable work "Social France in the Time of Philip Augustus," by Achille Luchaire. Edited by Louis Halphen. Translated by E. B. Krehbiel. Stanford University. Three Sorbonne lectures are by the author of the volume on the reigns of Louis VII, Philip Augustus, and Louis VIII. Luchaire's "Histoire de France." Although death prevented a final revision by the author, the lectures had been prepared with such care and thoroughness that only the slightest editing was required to shape them for publication.

Time and space forbid going into a detailed discussion of the facts given and theories advanced in all these essays which present a fairly complete picture of constructive social ideas. There are certain juxtapositions, but these naturally were unavoidable, seeing that the problems were discussed by different State economists from different angles. It is not a social treatise and a constructive spirit long since has passed

beyond the purely socialist range. Neither Mr. Ray Lankester, nor Mr. Haynes, nor Mr. Fry would dream of calling himself a socialist. The former was a student of social and national progress; the book will be an enlightenment of many theories hitherto misunderstood.

LITERARY NOTES.

We would suggest to the citizens of San Diego that it is a poor use for the American flag to ram it down the throat of a professional anarchist, says Harper's Weekly.